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I shall close this letter with observing, that I fully agree with the writer, whose account of the competition for the Silver Harp at the Carnarvon *Eisteddvod* you inserted in your last number. When I heard of the decision *I was very much astonished*; this is all I deem it proper to say on the subject, whatever I may think.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,
Newman Street, JOHN PARRY.
 Dec. 10, 1821.

ETYMOLOGY.

IT cannot have escaped the penetration of our readers, that we have, on sundry occasions, betrayed a particular fondness for etymological researches. That such is our propensity we have no hesitation in avowing; nay, more than this, we are not ashamed to confess, that, if ever we were disposed to mount one of those high-mettled creatures, yclept a hobby-horse, this same subject of etymology is the very one we should choose. To be sure, it is by no means improbable, that we might find our steed occasionally somewhat restive, and might even, as hath befallen other hobby-horsemen before us, stand a fair chance of being now then pitched over our hippogriff's head, to our manifest chagrin and discomfiture. But we hereby forewarn all whom it may concern, that not even these appalling hazards, which, like true knight-errants in literature, we should most willingly encounter, shall ever deter us from bestriding the aforesaid hobby-horse when and as often as our inclination so prompteth. The sequel of this article will explain the necessity of the foregoing sage ruminations, though, at this moment, we deem it fitting to add, nothing is farther from our inclination than to mount a horse of any sort whatever, our present business being, as the reader will soon discover, with quadrupeds of quite another description. In a

publication under notice, be it recollected, that the "Melodies" are the composition of—I wish I could say whom!—and that the Poetry has been supplied by various literary friends. I must be regarded, therefore, as an architect, or rather a builder, who erects a superstructure with materials provided for him.—J. P.

word, it is that interesting and useful animal, the cow, respecting which we are now about to offer a few speculations, our attention having been called to the subject by our cloistered and much-esteemed correspondent, whose erudite epistle we here insert, subjoining thereto, with all humility, a few supplementary particulars, which have been suggested by the perusal of it.

MON—MONA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CAMBRO-BRITON.

SIR,—It is well known, that Anglesea is by Tacitus called MONA, and that the Welsh name of the Island was anciently, and is still, MON. MON is also the ancient name of a cow. Hence arises a question, to wit, whether these words, in the language of the schools, are univocal, or equivocal, or analogous. Now, it would seem that there is some lurking analogy between Anglesea, or, to speak more correctly, between an island and a cow; yet, what that may be, it is at first sight difficult to say. But, to examine the matter more closely. MON is, doubtless, of the same origin with the Greek *μῶνος*, and is most appropriately applied to an island withdrawing into the solitude of the ocean. This also explains to us why it should have been applied not only to Anglesea, but equally to the Isle of Man, as it is by Cæsar. So far is clear. But it is a much more abstruse matter to account for the application of MON to a cow. If we chose to indulge in puns and call the word equivocal, we might say that a cow is called MON (that is to say *μῶνος*) as being *μὴ ὄρεος*. But such a conjecture we leave to the decision of that wondrous prodigy of taste—a German commentator. To return then; why is a cow called MON? Was the name first given to a cow or to an island? Most likely to the former. Cows are more familiar than islands and, in all probability, were better and sooner known to the ancient Britons. It appears not very improbable that MON was first applied to a cow, then to things of a solitary nature, (as in the case of MONYN), and subsequently to an island. To us, indeed, the cow appears of a gregarious disposition, but the cows of more ancient times, and in particular of mountain countries, we have reason to believe, were of a much more romantic turn, and great lovers, if not of absolute retirement

from the world, at least of occasional solitude. Hence, she was frequently seen browsing her lonely meal in the wild pasture*, as appears from that beautiful image, which Æschylus puts into the mouth of the suppliant Danaïdes.

Ιδε με ταν ικετιν φυγαδα ΠΕΡΙΔΡΟΜΟΝ
 Λευκορικτον ως ΔΑΜΑΛΙΝ αμπετραις
 Ηλιβατοισιν. Αλλω
 Πισυνες μεμυκε φραζε-
 σα βοτηρι μοχθους †.

If, then, the cows of old were given to solitude, it is easily seen how, through such a general idea, the appellation of this excellent and once romantic creature might come, in the course of time, and without many intervening ages, to signify an island.

Or was it, that the ancient Britons, like their modern descendants of the mountains, had each family their separate establishment of one favourite and solitary cow?—Or was it, that Mona was famous for its cows in olden time as it is to-day? Or was it some other reason, which we know nothing at all about; and my utter inability to determine which drives me to a conclusion?

Your's, &c.

Oxford.

MONACHUS.

If any one should unadvisedly quarrel with our friend *Monachus* for the facetiousness, with which he has occasionally treated this grave topic, we would merely ask him, in the words of a favourite author,—

————— *ridentem dicere verum*
Quid vetat?

Thus, when our correspondent, with apparent jocularly, enquires whether our forefathers, like their mountain progeny of these days, had their separate establishment of a single cow each, he designs, no doubt, a covert allusion to the following line of Taliesin, wherein the poet brings the fact almost to a demonstration. The line is—

“*Heb epa, heb HENVONVA, heb over byd*”—

Without a monkey, without a *cow-stall*, without a luxury on earth—

* Οιοκοτης.

† Suppl. 361—5.

which obviously implies, that a monkey and a cow were among the luxuries of our unambitious progenitors. And the quotation proves, moreover, the early use of the word *MON*, which forms a component part of the term *henvonva*, in reference to a cow. But we have abundant authority for the ancient prevalence of the word *henvon*, and consequently of *MON*, in this sense, as in the three following adages :—

Newydd benyg yn HENVON.

New entrails in an old *milch-cow*.

Pawb yn llosgwrn ei HENVON.

Every one at the tail of his *cow*.

Y sawl, a biau yr HENVON, ymaeled yn ei chynfon.

He, that owns the *milch-cow*, should take hold of her tail.

The particular humour of the allusion in the last two adages we profess ourselves unable to divine, unless, indeed, (as we are rather disposed to conjecture), it is to be taken in confirmation of our correspondent's hypothesis, by implying, that, as our ancestors maintained but one cow each, they should keep a strict watch over their treasure, and even secure them by their tails (if it might be necessary to resort to such an extremity) rather than lose them.

However, we are ready to admit, that we are far from regarding the argument, we have just quitted, as conclusive on the subject before us, and, therefore, turn with pleasure, to the more important point,—the affinity, as preserved in the Welsh word *MON*, between islands and cows. And, that such an affinity, strange as it may appear, does also exist in the nature of things is, we think, what we shall be at no loss to prove.

MON, as an elementary word, denotes, in Welsh, any thing isolated or separate, and is hence applied, with strict propriety, to an island. Both Anglesea and the Isle of Man, accordingly bore, anciently, as one does still, this designation, the first being called, as we find in the early poets, *Môn Vynydd*, the *Môn* of the Mountain, and the other *Môn Aw*, the *Môn* of the Water, afterwards corrupted into *Manaw*, and, finally, by the English into *Man*.

The appropriation of *MON* to an island is, therefore, well-established and natural; and we have already seen, that a cow, likewise, in former times, was known by the same appellation. It only remains, then, to shew with what justice the

word has been employed in the latter instance, which will bring us, in all probability, to the marrow of our question,—the reason of the consanguinity (if we may so express ourselves) between a cow and an island.

That the cow is naturally of a gregarious disposition we require not the ghost either of Linnæus or of Buffon to inform us: speaking of her in the abstract, therefore, we can hardly designate her as a *solitary* animal. But, may there not be seasons, and those too of the most interesting nature, when she assumes such a character? And that this is the fact experience furnishes us with continual proof. For it is well known to all, who have been observers of such matters, that, in the first period of maternal solicitude, (if we may apply such terms to the occasion), the cow almost invariably segregates herself, with her young progeny, from the rest of the herd. At this period it is, that her whole care centres in her offspring, and, to secure it from harm, she becomes a solitary grazer, or, as the Greek compound, referred to by *Monachus*, more happily expresses it, οἰσδής. And some such occasion as this it must have been that the Greek Tragedian contemplated in the following passage :—

Νυν δ' αὖ φρενος γ' Οἶο—

ΒΟΤΑΣ, φίλοις μέγα

Πένθος εὔρηται.—SOPHOC: Αἴας v. 617.

But Sophocles has other apparent allusions to the solitary disposition of the animal under consideration, one of which, as we wish to do her all possible honour, we shall here quote :—

Κἀπο μάλ' ὅς ἀφ' αὐ βέβα-

κει, ὥς ΠΟΠΤΙΣ ΕΡΗΜΑ.—Τραχύνειαι. v. 530.

And, upon another occasion, the same author, whose works abound in the truest observations of nature in all her varieties, makes the *bull* an emblem of solitude, as he is well known occasionally to be. The passage occurs in his *Œdipus Tyrannus*, where, in allusion to the unknown murderer of Laius, the Chorus say—

Φοίλᾳ γὰρ ἐπ' ἀγρίαν ὕλαν,

ἀνατ' ἀνὴρα καὶ πῆρας, ὥς ΤΑΥΡΟΣ

μειλὸς μίλῳ ποδὶ χερσὺν,

τὰ μισομφαλα γὰς ἀπονομφίζον

μαλ' εἶα.—v. 481.

But, having no wish to make a *bull* of this article, we return, as in duty bound, to the *cow*, whom we have seen to be, on certain occasions, fully entitled to the appellation of *MON* or a solitary one. Hence then, it is scarcely necessary to add, comes the natural relationship between this animal and an island, the latter separating itself from the great mass of continental territory as the other occasionally disunites herself from her fellows. This abstract view of the question were itself enough to decide it; but this is not all. For, in order to prove, that the consimilitude, of which we are speaking, has had its origin in the segregative character of the cow on the occasion alluded to,—to prove this, we repeat, almost to a demonstration, we may adduce the extraordinary fact, that an islet, contiguous to the Isle of Man, is called the Calf of Man. And, if that be not sufficient, two other instances occur off the Irish coast, one off that of Down, and the other off Dublin, where two islet rocks, one larger than the other, are called “The Cow and the Calf.” Nothing, we conceive, can be more conclusive as to the affinity anciently supposed to exist between cows and calves, on the one hand, and islands and islets, upon the other. The appropriation of the word *MON*, therefore, to the two occasions, above mentioned, has its foundation in nature*, and adds one more to the many proofs of the venerable purity and philosophical character of the Welsh tongue.

EXCERPTA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CAMBRO-BRITON.

SIR,—Accident lately threw in my way a small work, by the Rev. James Adams, a Scotchman, printed at Edinburgh in 1799, entitled “*The Pronunciation of the English Language vindicated from anomaly and caprice*,” with “*An Appendix on the Dialects of the Human Speech in all Countries*.” It is on account of a passage in the “Appendix,” that I take the liberty of calling your attention to this publication. The following is the

* [*Query Extraordinary*].—Has the English word *moan* any thing to do with the bellowings of a lonely cow in search of her calf,—*φραζεσα βόητη μοχθους*?